

LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

October 28, 2013

Members:

Chester: Sally Murray *
Clinton: Alan Kravitz *
Rodney Kirouac *
Cromwell:
Deep River: Bruce Edgerton * (7:15)
Durham: Frank DeFelice *
Joe Pasquale
East Haddam: Crary Brownell *
Lou Salicrup
East Hampton: Mark Philhower
Meg Wright *
Essex: Frank Hall *
Alan Kerr *
Haddam: Stasia DeMichele
Raul deBrigard *
Killingworth: James K. O'Brien *
Stephanie Warren *
Lyme: David Tiffany
Phyllis Ross *
Middlefield: Robert Johnson
Middletown: Beth Emery *
Molly Salafia
Old Lyme: Steven Ross *
Harold Thompson
Old Saybrook: Dr. Cathryn Flanagan *
Karen Jo Marcolini *
Portland: Betty Jenak
Michael Woronoff
Westbrook: Bill Neale *
Marie Farrell *

* Members Present

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Others:

Walt Adametz

Staff Present:

Linda Krause

Judy Snyder

Torrance Downes

Dan Bourret

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman DeFelice called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

The members introduced themselves and attendance was taken.

3. SEATING OF ALTERNATES

Alternate Meg Wright was seated for East Hampton member Mark Philhower.

4. AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

Frank DeFelice asked if there were any amendments to the agenda.

Frank Hall stated that he would like to amend the agenda to include: 1) Chairman's Report; 2) Mission Statement; and, 3) Walt Adametz, to discuss the Regional Agricultural Council.

5. APPROVE THE AGENDA

Upon motion of Frank Hall, seconded by Crary Brownell, it was unanimously voted to approve the agenda as amended.

These items were placed on the agenda as 6A, 6B, and 6C.

6. PUBLIC SESSION

Frank DeFelice asked if anyone from the public wished to speak. There was no one at this time.

6A. Chairman's Report

Frank DeFelice stated that he thought this is a good, cohesive group of knowledgeable people to work together to complete the plan. He would like to set a timetable so the members do not get discouraged and the plan can be completed in a timely manner.

6B. Mission Statement

Frank DeFelice distributed and read the draft mission statement to the RPC as follows:

“As a successor to the Connecticut River Estuary and Midstate Regional Planning Agencies, it is the mission of the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments Regional Planning Commission (RPC) to: 1) develop a comprehensive Plan of Conservation and Development for our newly combined region which protects and leverages the unique attributes of the Lower Connecticut River Valley, its associated shoreline and its seventeen member towns; 2) review and assess the inter-municipal and regional impacts of land use decisions referred to it by its member Planning or Zoning Agencies; and, 3) review and assess the impact of potential local, state or federal regulation on our region.”

Linda Krause suggested an additional phrase 4) and such other tasks as the Council of Governments may delegate to the RPC. Steven Ross suggested that part of the first sentence (“As a successor to the Connecticut River Estuary and Midstate Regional Planning Agencies,) should be deleted and Beth Emery felt “it is” should be deleted and the sentence should start with “The mission ...”. Other comments included the addition of 1) develop “and maintain” a comprehensive ... and to delete “newly combined” region Ms. Emery asked for clarification of “shoreline” which includes the Sound and the river.

It was decided that Linda Krause will revise the statement and e-mail to the members.

6C. Lower CT River Valley Regional Agriculture Council

Walt Adametz, Chairman of the Lower CT River Valley Regional Agriculture Council spoke about local agriculture. This Regional Council, the first in the state is comprised of 17 representatives, one from each town in the River COG. At this time the towns of Cromwell, Lyme, Middlefield, Middletown and Old Saybrook have not appointed a representative. Mr. Adametz discussed the many different kinds of farming and agriculture and the Council's willingness to work with individual town boards and commissions to support farming in the state. The Ag Council is sending out a letter to various town commissions and personnel to introduce themselves and explaining what they hope to accomplish. The Council will share information and educate people to the wide variety of activities that are included as farming and

agriculture. Raul deBrigard stated that a large percent of Connecticut is forest and that is considered agriculture. Alan Kravitz said that food sustainability is an important aspect of farming in the state as is aquaculture. Beth Emery stated that the definition of agriculture is in the *Connecticut State Statute*, Section 1-1q (attachment #A). Mr. Adametz stated that the Ag Council has applied for two grants, one for a website. Torrance Downes added that the agendas and minutes of the Ag Council are on the River COG website.

The Ag Council meets the 3rd Thursday of the month and everyone is welcome to attend and participate. Mr. DeFelice thanked Mr. Adametz for his presentation.

7. REFERRALS

- a. East Haddam: Alternative Soil-based Subdivision Regulations
Subdivision Regulations (New Section 4.06.02)
Zoning Regulations (Section 10.4.2, alternative soil-based subdivision review)
Definitions related to soils

Crary Brownell asked that copies of proposals be e-mailed to the members.

Torrance Downes discussed the proposed regulation changes. East Haddam zoning and subdivision regulations now require that each new building lot be able to accommodate a “minimum rectangle”. The proposal would allow for the approval of building lots that do not meet the “minimum rectangle” but otherwise would be buildable in accordance with the regulations.

Upon motion of Alan Kravitz, seconded by Phyllis Ross, it was unanimously voted that the proposal is not significant and will not have a negative impact on the abutting municipalities.

- b. Middletown: Medical Marijuana
Zoning Regulations (Section 61.01.58)

Torrance Downes discussed the proposed amendment to the zoning regulations regarding the sale or dispensation of medical marijuana. The proposed change would affect three zones in Middletown however, this would not have an impact within 500’ of other River COG towns, but would bring the regulations into compliance with the *Connecticut State Statutes*.

Upon motion of Alan Kravitz, seconded by Crary Brownell, it was unanimously voted that the proposal is not significant and will not have a negative impact on abutting municipalities.

8. POCD

- a. Visioning and Outreach (Towns, Regional Commissions/Interest Groups)
- b. Data Collection
- c. Structure and Design

Linda Krause distributed three documents: #1.- Draft Content Structure; #2.- Current Program; and #3.- Growth Management (attachments 1, 2 and 3) for the members' review.

Ms. Krause stated that the Conway School has agreed to research the feasibility of connecting and using the Valley Railroad for freight and passenger service. She also stated that the River COG has received the RPIP grant for the mapping of all town parcels. Letters have been sent to the towns explaining the mapping process and staff will be visiting each town to review GIS databases. Ms. Krause also stated that two interns are collecting data in each of the towns to be incorporated into the region database. An example of data being collected is: lists of all restaurants in each town, financial information as to how much towns charge in fees; and the amount of vacant industrial land that is available.

The members discussed various changes, additions, and deletions to the draft content structure document. Ms. Krause will revise the list of topics and this will be distributed at the next meeting.

Marie Farrell asked for a timetable from the staff. Alan Kravitz suggested that a date be set at a future meeting. Frank DeFelice stated he would propose December 2014. Ms. Krause advised that any timetable must be subject to change due to other staff commitments. Mr. DeFelice suggested a list of questions be prepared and presented to each planning and/or zoning commission for their comments prior to the meeting. Cathryn Flanagan told the members she, with the help of the town planner, had prepared and sent a letter to the Old Saybrook boards and commissions chairmen asking for their input and vision for the region (attachment #B).

9. STAFF REPORT

It was decided that the approval of the 2014 meeting dates will be tabled to the November meeting.

It was agreed by consensus to cancel the regularly scheduled meeting for December 23rd, 2013.

10. NOMINATING COMMITTEE – ELECTION OF OFFICERS – JANUARY 2014

Nominating of officers will be at the November meeting with election of officers at the January meeting. The by-laws of the River COG state that all elected positions are for a one year term.

11. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 23, 2013 MINUTES

Frank DeFelice asked for approval of the September 23rd minutes.

Upon motion of Sally Murray, seconded by Alan Kravitz, it was unanimously voted to approve the LCRVRPC minutes of the September 23, 2013 meeting.

12. MISCELLANEOUS

There were no items at this time.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion of Sally Murray, seconded by Bill Neale, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Snyder
Recording Secretary